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PATENT

Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, please amend the paragraph beginning at line 4 and ending at line 7 as follows:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This ~~application~~ is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/545,479, filed April 7, 2000, ~~which issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,696,056 on February 24, 2004~~^{new} pending, which claims the benefit of United States provisional application Serial No. 60/128,596, filed April 9, 1999. The contents of each of these ~~applications~~ ^{documents} are hereby incorporated by reference.